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# Relating Socio-Cultural Network Concepts to Process-Oriented Methodology

Fumiya Onaka\*

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**Abstract:** »Soziokulturelle Netzwerk-Konzepte in prozessorientierter Methodik«. Examining the works of classical sociologists, this study demonstrates that the "socio-cultural network analysis" is a "process-oriented methodology". "Socio-cultural network" is a concept originally proposed on the basis of "thick comparison" studies conducted of two Thai villages; it includes both cultural elements and social actors. Different from the early classical sociologists (Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer), the later classical sociologists (Georg Simmel, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Norbert Elias, Talcott Parsons) utilized the terms "network" and "process" and thereby prepared the basis for process-oriented methodology. Among them, only Simmel, Weber and Elias created a direct portal to process-oriented methodology by employing those two terms in a significant and interconnected way and in their philosophical, historical and comparative studies. Thus, the socio-cultural network analysis can be regarded as a descendant of these three sociologists.

**Keywords:** network, process-oriented, classical sociologists, socio-cultural, thick comparison, local culture, village.

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## 1. Introduction

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The socio-cultural network analysis is a framework of research I previously proposed on the basis of "thick comparison" studies of the local cultures and communities of two Thai villages. In Onaka (2007, 2010), I argued about the network's empirical relevance and effectiveness for summarizing research results. I described the socio-cultural network analysis as a method that considers both social actors and cultural elements to be nodes, and all the relationships between them to be links. The model includes nodes and links with different time spans. Following the concept of *Träger*<sup>1</sup> of Max Weber and

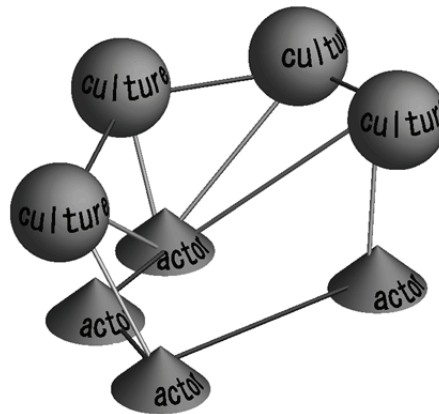
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<sup>1</sup> Weber's concept of "Träger", on which this model is partly based, is as follows: „In Indien hat die Prophetie nicht gefehlt, aber – wie noch zu erörtern – einen sehr spezifischen Charakter gehabt, und dementsprechend auch die dort sehr hoch sublimierte Erlösungsethik. Prophetie und Priestertum sind die beiden Träger der Systematisierung und Rationalisierung der religi-

“symbol”<sup>2</sup> of Clifford Geertz, I hypothesize socio-cultural networks to be two-tiered: the upper tier is a one-mode network of cultural elements and the lower tier is a one-mode network of social actors; there is also a two-mode network that consists of cultural elements and social actors (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Basic Image of the Socio-Cultural Network Diagram (cf. Onaka 2010)



These concepts *Träger* and “symbol” imply that social actors serve as the basis for the meaning of the terms.

“Social network” has generally been related to the concept of “structure,” which confronts the idea of “process” on the grounds that social network analysis depicts the synchronic structure of a society (Scott 2000; Wasserman and Faust 1994). Also, the concept of “socio-cultural network” was originally proposed in analysing the conditions of Thai villages at a certain point in time (Onaka 2007). However, it was also proposed to analyse changes occurring within a certain time period (Onaka 2010).

This proposition lacks a sufficient explanation of its own sociological background, because it is based only on a brief reference to Weber’s and Geertz’s work. Of course, the works of two scholars are indisputably important among those of classical sociologists, but they are not representative of all of them.

Moreover, it lacks a chronological perspective, i.e. it remains unclear how the socio-cultural network is related to the concept of “process”, the basis for

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ösen Ethik (Weber 1922b, 250).“ In this quotation, prophets and priests are “social actors”, which work as “Träger” of “cultural elements”: i. e. “religious ethics”.

<sup>2</sup> Geertz’s concept of “symbol” is used for any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception – the conception is the symbol’s meaning (Geertz 1973, 91).

“process-oriented methodology”, which was named by Baur and Ernst(2011). As mentioned above, “network” is related to the concept of “structure of state,” which is an opposite of “process,” however it could also be the “structure of process”.

In this paper, I investigate those two points by surveying the works of classical sociologists.

Examining the main works of classical sociologists, I search for tendencies in their usage of the term corresponding to “network,” “process” and several related words. I analyze the words of classical sociologists such as Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Émile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Norbert Elias, and Talcott Parsons.

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## 2. Results

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I will introduce the results in logical order rather than chronological order.

### 2.1 Auguste Comte

To begin with, I consider “Cours de philosophie positive Tome VI” (1830) and “Système de politique positive Tome quadrième et dernier” (1854), which can be considered as Comte’s main sociological works.

In these publications, Comte did not use the terms which correspond to “network”. Although the English word “network” was used since the 1560s,<sup>3</sup> its application to society began only after 1839.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, Comte did not use the term “process,” either. Instead, he employed only the term *progrès* as follows;

Or, cette continuité ne saurait être obtenue qu’autant que le progrès humain représente toujours le simple développement d’un ordre immuable, dont l’étude préalable domine toutes les explication historique. (Ibid., 2; italics mine)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary notes the following: “network sb. [...]1. Work in which threads, wires, or similar materials are arranged in the fashion of a net; esp. a light fabric made of netted threads. /1560 BIBLE (Genev.) *Exod. xxvii.* 4 Thou shalt make vnto it a grate like networke of brasse (Simpson & Weiner 1989, 345).”

<sup>4</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary also notes the following: “c. A complex connection or system of rivers, canals, railways, or the like. Also without of./1839 Thirlwall *Greece xviii.* VI. 110 The island, or network of islands, formed by the Danube. Loc. cit. J”

<sup>5</sup> “The continuity this implies requires as the condition of its attainment that man’s progress never represent aught but the development of an unchangeable order; the previous study of this order consequently presides over all historical explanations” (Comte 1968, 2).

However, a characteristic of the notion of *progrès* is that it includes the author's value, while the "process" is presented as a neutral term. This value is expressed by Comte's basic theory of the three stages (*trois états*) of humanity.

La première consiste dans la succession des trois états, fictif, abstrait, et positif, que présente chaque entendement envers des conceptions quelconques, mais avec une vitesse proportionnée à la généralité des phénomènes correspondants. Par la seconde, on reconnaît une progression analogue pour l'activité, d'abord conquérante, puis défensive, enfin industrielle. (Comte 1854, 177)<sup>6</sup>

In summary, Comte used terms corresponding to neither "network" nor "process".

## 2.2 Herbert Spencer

In this section, I analyse "Social Statics: Or The Conditions Essential to Human Happiness Specified and the First of Them Developed" (1851) and "The Study of Sociology" (1873). Spencer did not employ the term "network" or similar terms. Although, he used the terms "relation" and "relationship," these are highly abstract terms. For example, they can appear as shown below:

It is not likely that they have given him ideas of the qualitative and quantitative relations of cause and effect holding throughout society. (Spencer 1873, 8)

As this quotation indicates, Spencer's works are focused on "society," and he was not so interested in personal relations in it.

On the other hand, Spencer frequently used the term "process" to describe society.

If we compare a small society with a large one, we get clear proof that those *processes* of co-operation by which social life is made possible, assume high forms only when the numbers of the co-operating citizens are great. (Spencer 1873, 120; italics mine)

"Process" was, as a term, used in natural sciences as well.

Nor must we forget how much has been done towards explaining the physical constitutions of the heavenly bodies, as well as their motions: the natures of nebulae, and the *processes* going on in Sun and stars, have been greatly elucidated by Huggins, Lockyer, and others. (Ibid., 138; italics mine)

Indeed, its fundamental basis is Darwin's Origin of Species.

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<sup>6</sup> "The first law consists in the succession of the three states, fictitious, abstract, and positive, through which every understanding passes in all its conceptions without exception, but with a velocity proportioned to the generality of the particular phenomena in question. The second is a recognition of an analogous progression in human activity, which in its first stage is Conquest, then Defence; lastly Industry" (Comte 1968, 157).

This view of his, so admirably worked out, has been adopted by the great majority of naturalists; and, by making the *process of organic evolution* more comprehensible, it is revolutionizing biological conceptions throughout the world. In the words of Professor Cohn, “no book of recent times has influenced the conceptions of modern science like the first edition of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*.” (Ibid., 139; italics mine)

Thus, it is a matter of course for Spencer to write as follows;

*The process of Evolution* which has gradually modified and advanced men’s conceptions of the Universe, will continue to modify and advance them during the future. The ideas of Cause and Origin, which have been slowly changing, will change still further. (Ibid., 188; italics mine)

The substitution of a mechanical charity for charity prompted by the heart is manifestly unfavourable to the growth of men’s sympathies, and therefore adverse to the *process of adaptation*. (Spencer 1851, 328; italics mine)

Therefore, Spencer’s use of the term “process” is deeply embedded in the Theory of Evolution following the law of the “survival of fittest,” and its meaning resembles that of Comte’s notion of “progress.”

In summary, Spencer was not interested in “network” so much as in “society” as an organism. Although he employed the term “process,” but its meaning is not so distant from Comte’s notion of “progress”.

### 2.3 Émile Durkheim

Next, I analyse Durkheim’s “Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse” (1912), “De la division du travail social” (1922), “Les règles de la méthode sociologique” (1922), and “Le suicide” (1960), which can be considered as his main works.

Durkheim often employed the term “réseau,” which is usually translated as “network”. For example,

Au contraire, à mesure qu’on avance vers les temps modernes, on voit le mariage se développer. Le réseau de liens qu’il crée s’étend de plus en plus, les obligations qu’il sanctionne se multiplient. (Durkheim 1922, 23; italics mine)<sup>7</sup>

Dans le premier cas, il a l’aspect d’une croix. Des cordons faits soit avec ces cheveux humains soit avec de la fourrure d’opossum ou de bandicoot traversent en diagonales l’espace compris entre les bras de la croix et les extrémités de l’axe central; ils sont serrés les uns contre les autres et constituent ainsi un réseau qui a la forme d’un losange. (Durkheim 1912, 175; italics mine)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “On the contrary, as we advance to modern times, we see marriage developing. The circle of ties which it creates extends further and further; the obligations that it sanctions multiply” (Durkheim 1933, 59).

<sup>8</sup> In the former case, it has the appearance of a cross. Cords made either of human hair or opossum or bandicoot fur diagonally cross the space included between the arms of the cross

He used the term to refer to concrete human relationships that are delicately interlaced. This concept might be suitable to his notion of *le fait social* which constrains human beings from outside like a thing (*comme des choses*) (Durkheim 1919, VII).

The term *processus* which corresponds to “process,” also frequently appears in Durkheim’s works.

La division du travail social n’apparaît plus que comme une forme particulière de ce *processus* général, et les sociétés, en se conformant à cette loi, semblent céder à un courant qui est né bien avant elles et qui entraîne dans le même sens le monde vivant tout entier. (Durkheim 1922, 4; italics added by the original author)<sup>9</sup><sup>10</sup>

il faut d’abord que ces dernières soient confondues au sein d’une seule et même conscience collective pour que le processus de différenciation puisse commencer ou recommencer. (Ibid., 262; italics added by the original author)<sup>11</sup>

Le même *processus* de segmentation qui a démembré primitivement la phratrie et qui a donné naissance aux clans proprement dits, se continue sans terme à l’intérieur de ces derniers; par suite de cet émiettement progressif, un clan n’a souvent qu’un effectif des plus réduits. (Durkheim 1912, 156; italics mine)<sup>12</sup>

Encore bien moins ce mot peut-il remplacer l’analyse du *processus* si complexe d’où résultent les sentiments collectifs et dont nous n’avons pu donner plus haut qu’une description conjecturale et approximative. (Durkheim 1960, 116; italics added by the original author)<sup>13</sup>

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and the extremities of the central axis; as they are quite close to each other, they form a network in the form of a lozenge (Durkheim 1915, 124).

<sup>9</sup> “The division of labor in society appears to be no more than a particular form of this general process; and societies, in conforming to that law, seem to be yielding to a movement that was born before them, and that similarly governs the entire world” (Durkheim 1933, 41).

<sup>10</sup> The quotation below suggests an influence from Georg Simmel: “C’est d’abord la Soziale Differenzierung de M. Simmel (Leipzig, vii-117), où il n’est pas question de la division du travail spécialement, mais du processus d’individuation, d’une manière générale” (Durkheim 1922, 9; italics added by the original author) [“First, the Soziale Differenzierung of Simmel, where it is not a question of the division of labor specially, but of the process of individuation in general” (Durkheim 1933, 46)].

<sup>11</sup> “It is necessary first that these latter be mingled in the midst of the same identical collective conscience for the process of differentiation to begin or recommence” (Durkheim 1933, 278).

<sup>12</sup> “The same process of dismemberment which broke up the original phratries and give birth to clans properly so-called still continues within these latter; as a result of this progressive crumbling, a clan frequently has only a very small effective force” (Durkheim 1915, 111).

<sup>13</sup> “Much less can this word take the place of analysis of the complex process whence come collective sentiments and of which we have been able to supply only a conjectural and approximate description above” (Durkheim 1963, 130).

In these quotations, the term “process” is liberated from the notion of “process of evolution” or “process of adaptation” seen in *The Origin of Species*. It seems Durkheim saw various kinds of processes in his mainly comparative studies.

In summary, in Durkheim’s works, the term “network” (*réseau*) began to be used at the same time that “process” became a neutral term.

## 2.4 Georg Simmel

In this section, I examine “Philosophie des Geldes” (1900), “Soziologie” (1908), and “Über die soziale Differenzierung” (1989), which can be considered Simmel’s main works in the field of sociology. In these works, he employed the term *Netzwerk*, which directly corresponds to “network”.

Der kausale Zusammenhang, der jedes soziale Element in das Sein und Tun jedes andern verflucht und so das äußere Netzwerk der Gesellschaft zustande bringt, verwandelt sich in einen teleologischen, sobald man ihn von den individuellen Trägern her betrachtet, von seinen Produzenten, die sich als Ichs fühlen und deren Verhalten aus dem Boden der für sich seienden, sich selbst bestimmenden Persönlichkeit wächst. (Simmel 1908, 45; italics added by the original author).

Da aber jeder auf diese Weise Verpflichtete auch ein irgendwie Berechtigter ist, entsteht ein Netzwerk hin- und hergehender Rechte und Pflichten, in dem aber das Recht das primäre, tonangebende Element ist; die Pflicht ist nur das freilich unvermeidliche, in demselben Akt gesetzte Korrelat zu jenem. (Ibid., 45; italics mine)

Indem gerade die Gesellschafte die Arbeitsvermittlung an sich zogen, war der Geselle eigentlich nirgends in Deutschland (und entsprechend in den andren Ländern) fremd, ein *Netzwerk* von Nachrichtenvermittlung unter den Gesellen sorgte verhältnismässig schnell für die Ausgleichung von Nachfrage und Angebot der Arbeit an den einzelnen Punkten, und so war es zunächst dieser sehr handgreifliche Nutzen, der aus dem Gesellenwandern einen durch das ganze Reich erstreckten Gesellenverband erwachsen ließ. (Ibid., 683; italics mine)

As these quotations suggest, Simmel used the term to indicate interlaces of human relations accompanied by the links with the notions of right and duty.

On the other hand, Simmel also used the term “process” quite frequently;

Nachdem der sociale *Differenzierungsprozeß* zu der Scheidung zwischen Hoch und Niedrig; geführt hat, bringt die bloß formale Thatsache einer bestimmten socialen Stellung die durch sie charakterisierten Mitglieder der verschiedenartigsten Gruppen in innerliche, oft auch äußerliche Beziehung. (Simmel 1989, 170; italics mine)

Hiermit erst schließt sich das Geld der allgemeinen Entwicklung an, die auf jedem Gebiet und in jedem Sinn das Substantielle in freischwebende *Prozesse* aufzulösen strebt; und zwar gewinnt das Geld diesen Anschluß in jeder überhaupt möglichen Form. (Simmel 1900, 136; italics mine)



Erst als die einzelnen *Prozesse* innerhalb der Organismen, deren Summe oder Verwebung das Leben ist, untersucht wurden, erst als erkannt wurde, daß das Leben nur in diesen besonderen Vorgängen an und zwischen den Organen und Zellen besteht, gewann die Wissenschaft vom Leben ihren festen Boden (Simmel 1908, 12; italics mine).

In addition, he invented a great number of compounds from this term; e.g. “Grundprozess” (Ibid., 18), “Wertungsprozess” (Ibid., 30), “Opferprozess” (Ibid., 36), “Tauschprozess” (Ibid., 47), “Abstraktionsprozess” (Ibid., 113), “Zweckprozess” (Ibid., 185), “Lebensprozess” (Ibid., 292), “Zirkulationsprozess” (Ibid., 343), “Befreiungsprozess” (Ibid., 424), “Produktionsprozess” (Ibid., 522), “Denkprozess” (Ibid., 526), “Bewußtseinsprozess” (Ibid., 31), “Sozialisierungsprozess” (Ibid., 31), “Werdeprozess” (Ibid., 76n), “Destillationsprozess” (Ibid., 263), “Wechselwirkungsprozess” (Ibid., 496), Heilprozess (Ibid., 614), “Begrenzungsprozess” (Ibid., 623), “Entschädigungsprozess” (Ibid., 685), and “Entwicklungsprozess” (Ibid., 769).

As this list suggests, there are several different levels of process. First, there are processes inside human beings, e.g. *seelische Prozeß* (Simmel 1900, 557), *psychologische Prozeß* (Ibid., 114, 341, 771). Second, there are processes outside human beings, e.g. *ökonomische Prozeß* (Ibid., 540), *organisch-sozialer Prozeß* (Ibid., 65), *sozialer Prozeß* (Ibid., 540)

Those two terms *Netzwerk* and *Prozeß* are related in the above quotation. For example, the first abovementioned quotation including the word *Netzwerk* above from “Soziologie” is followed by this sentence.

Daß jene phänomenale Ganzheit sich dem Zweck dieser, gleichsam von außen an sie herantretenden Individualitäten fügt, dem von innen bestimmenden Lebensprozeß dieser die Stätte bietet, an der seine Besonderheit zu einem notwendigen Glied in dem Leben des Ganzen wird – dies gibt, als eine fundamentale Kategorie, dem Bewußtsein des Individuums die Form, die es zu einem sozialen Elemente designiert. (Simmel 1908, 45)

This quotation suggests that Simmel’s *Netzwerk der Gesellschaft* is closely related to *Lebensprozeß* of individuals in his philosophical studies.

In summary, Simmel employed a term that corresponds to “network“. He also used a term corresponding to “process” and utilized it in various ways, free from evolution theory, in the same way as Durkheim. Moreover, those two terms were closely linked. “Network” has become one of the targets for sociology focusing on *Lebensprozeß*.

## 2.5 Max Weber

Here I investigate “Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religions Soziologie,” (1921) “Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft,” (1922b) and “Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre” (1922a), which can be considered as Weber’s main works. In these works, he did not use the word “Netzwerk“. However, he used the term *Verflechtung*, to indicate a network among human beings and ideas.

[D]ie Arbeit konzentrierte sich auf die in Wahrheit entscheidende Frage: worin denn nun die schließlich doch unbezweifelbare Eigenart der israelitischen Religionsentwicklung gegenüber jenen teils allgemein verbreiteten, teils durch konkrete Kulturzusammenhänge bedingten Gemeinsamkeiten beruhe und weiter: wodurch diese historische Eigenart bedingt sei. Aber alsbald begann wieder die *Verflechtung* mit den durch eigne religiöse Stellungnahme bedingten Wertungen. (Weber 1920, 4; italics mine)

[D]as wissenschaftliche Interesse ist in letzter Instanz in denjenigen Bestandteilen des historischen Ablaufs verankert, welche verständlich deutbares menschliches Sich-Verhalten in sich schließen, auf die Rolle, welche jenes für uns "sinnvolle" Tun in seiner *Verflechtung* mit dem Walten "sinnloser" Naturmächte gespielt und auf die Beeinflussungen, welche es von dorthin erfahren hat. (Weber 1922a, 109; italics mine)

Sie ist, von einer rationalen Wirtschaft her gesehen, eine typische Macht der "Unwirtschaftlichkeit". sie lehnt jede *Verflechtung* in den Alltag ab. Sie kann nur, in voller innerer Indifferenz, unstillen Gelegenheitserwerb sozusagen "mitnehmen". "Rentnertum" als Form der Wirtschaftsenthobenheit kann – für manche Arten – die wirtschaftliche Grundlage charismatischer Existenzen sein. (Weber 1922b, 142; italics mine)

As these quotations suggest, *Verflechtung* refers to relationships between both human beings and ideas, which is different from *rationalen Wirtschaft*. It can make compounds as follows;

Es war die wachsende *Marktverflechtung* der Wirtschaften, welche die Unsicherheit wachsend stark empfinden ließ. (Weber 1922b, 716; italics mine)

Moreover, *Verflechtung* can be both economical and non-economical.

Weber made use of the term "process" in various ways in "Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religions Soziologie," "Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft," and "Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre".<sup>14</sup> The usages can be divided in three types. The first type refers to a conceptualization of historical change, as illustrated below;

Ehe wir die Quelle und die Eigenart dieses Prozesses näher Verfolgen, müssen wir die äußeren Formen, in welcher diese Theokratisierung der israelitischen Sozialordnung sich vollzog und die Gewalten, welche sie beförderten, kennen lernen. (Weber 1921, 6)

Here, the word *Prozess* means Theokratisierung. This first type of usage led to his famous theories in both historical and comparative studies, such as *Rationalisierung* (Weber 1922b, 382), *Modernisierung* (Ibid., 274), and so on. How-

<sup>14</sup> In his previous work, Weber did not use the word *Prozeß* and used a similar word *Verfahren*, instead. "Wurde bisher nur der Beweis zu erbringen gesucht, dass ein Zusammenhang zwischen der Aufmessungsart und zwischen staatsrechtlichen Differenzen in den Qualitäten des römischen Ackers besteht, so wenden wir uns jetzt der juristischen Natur dieser Differenzen im einzelnen und der Betrachtung der Bedeutung des römischen Ackerteilungsverfahrens für die sozialen, wirtschaftlichen und rechtlichen Zustände zu" (Weber 1891, 48; italics mine).

ever, “Evolution” is not included in this type. From his *Wertfreiheit* standpoint, the word “Evolution” appears only as “Evolutionist” or *evolutionistisch*.

The second type is as follows;

Ebenso kann (und dies ist wichtiger) ziffermäßig der technische Erfolg eines bestimmten Produktionsprozesses ermittelt und mit technischen Prozessen anderer Art verglichen werden. (Weber 1922b, 54)

Here it is used as a compound with the word *Produktion*. This second type of usage helped him to describe routines in society. It can be seen, for example, *Arbeitsprozeß* (Ibid., 65), *politischen Prozeß* (Ibid., 185), and *organischen Prozeß* (Ibid., 267), and so on.

The third type of *Prozeß* is a legal term, as indicated in the following example;

Wo der Rechtsgang auf Einfluß des Imperiums auf die Prozeßinstruktion beruhte, wie z. R. im älteren römischen Recht und, in technisch ganz anderer Art, auch im englischen Recht, liegt die Auffassung nahe, daß der materielle Rechtsanspruch mit Recht auf Benutzung eines prozessualen Klageschemas: der römischen „actio“, des englischen „writ“ identisch sei. (Ibid., 394)

This usage is frequent especially in “Rechtssoziologie” and subsequent parts.

Among these three usages, the first one (i. e. conceptualization of historical change) is characteristic for Weber. As the first quotation of this section indicates, “Verflechtung” is considered to influence a *Prozeß* (“*Religionsentwicklung*”).

In summary, Weber’s works contain the words that correspond to the terms “network” and “process“. Especially, he utilized the latter term as a tool for presenting his original conceptualization.

## 2.6 Norbert Elias

In this section, I investigate “Was ist Soziologie?,” (1978) “Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation,” (1992, 1997) and “Die Gesellschaft der Individuen” (1991). Elias used both *Netzwerk*, which is a direct translation of “network” in “Was ist Soziologie?” and “Die Gesellschaft der Individuen“.

Er macht seine Spielzüge zugleich aus und in einem *Netzwerk* interdependenter Spieler, indem es Bündnisse und Gegnerschaften, Kooperation und Rivalität auf verschiedenen Stockwerken gibt. (Elias 1978, 91; italics mine)

Er lebt und er lebte von klein auf in einem *Netzwerk* von Abhängigkeiten, das er nicht einfach durch das Drehen eines Zauberings, sondern nur soweit dessen Aufbau selbst es erlaubt, zu ändern oder zu durchbrechen vermag, in einem Gespinnst von beweglichen Beziehungen, die sich nun, mindestens zum Teil, in ihm niedergeschlagen haben als sein persönliches Gepräge (Elias 1987:31; italics mine).

He also used the words *Verflechtung* and *Geflecht* for describing these relationships in “Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation.”

Diese fundamentale Verflechtung der einzelnen, menschlichen Pläne and Handlungen kann Wandlungen und Gestaltungen herbeiführen, die kein einzelner Mensch geplant oder geschaffen hat. (Elias 1997, 324; italics by the original author)

What is most distinctive in the works of Elias is that the term “process” and “network” are closely interconnected in his historical and comparative studies. For example:

Die Frage führt mitten hinein in das Getriebe der gesellschaftlichen *Prozesse*, in die Veränderungen der menschlichen *Verflechtungen* und Abhängigkeitsformen, mit denen sich Verhalten und Triebblage im Sinne der „Zivilisation“ änderten. (Elias 1997, 40; italics mine)

This viewpoint can also be observed in his game model. He emphasizes the *processual* nature of *Beziehungen interdependenter Menschen*:

Auch diese Modelle sind vereinfachende Gedankenexperimente, mit deren Hilfe es möglich ist, den *Prozeßcharakter* von Beziehungen interdependenter Menschen aufzuzeigen. (Elias 1978, 83; italics mine)

Another important characteristic of Elias’ “Netzwerk” is that it seems to be assumed not only among human beings but also among *human beings* and *ideas*.

Wenn die gesellschaftlichen Einheiten größer und vielstöckiger werden, begegnet man neuen Formen der Gefühlbindungen. Sie heften sich nicht nur an Personen, sondern in zunehmendem Maße auch *an Symbole der größeren Einheiten, an Wappen, an Fahnen und an gefühlgeladene Begriffe*. (Ibid., 150; italics mine)

As *Gefühlbindungen* in this quotation is referred to by the term *Beziehungengeflechte* in the same paragraph, we can assume that Elias’ *Netzwerk* also includes ideas.

In summary, the term “network” and “process” are the central focus of Elias’ sociology. What is more important is that the two terms are closely associated.

## 2.7 Talcott Parsons

Next, I examine “The Structure of Social Action,” (1949) and “The Social System,” (1951) which can be counted as two of Parsons’ main works. Parsons employed the term “network” several times in “The Social System”.

The social system is, as we have seen, essentially a network of interactive relationships. (Parsons 1951, 51)

As this quotation indicates, the term “network” is incorporated in the description of the “social system,” which is the most important concept of this work prepared for comparative studies. However, the term “network” has a slight passive and negative nuance, as illustrated by the text below;

But a social system is in one aspect a network of sub-collectivities, connected by “interstitial” patternings and mechanisms. At the same time a society, and many though not all types of partial social system, is itself a collectivity of a higher order of organization. (Ibid., 133)

This quotation reveals that “network” is regarded only as a connection by “‘interstitial’ patternings and mechanisms” and that it is, by implication, regarded as a “lower order” of collectivity rather than a social system. The term “process” is more essential in “The Social System”.

Since a social system is a system of processes of interaction between actors, it is the structure of the relations between the actors as involved in the interactive process which is essentially the structure of the social system. (Ibid., 25)

“Process” is used as a key term of the definition of “social system,” and it is pivotal also in “The Structure of Social Action”.

In this sense then, an “act” involves logically the following: (1) It implies an agent, an “actor”. (2) For purposes of definition the act must have an “end,” a future state of affairs toward which the process of action is oriented. (3) It must be initiated in a “situation” of which the trends of development differ in one or more important respects from the state of affairs to which the action is oriented, the end. (Parsons 1949, 44)

Here, the term “process” is used as a keyword in the definition of “act,” one of the most important concepts in this work. However, the term is marginalized even though it is located in the center of the works. The most important terms in the definition are “the actor” and “the end,” and “process” is only a bridge between them. The term “process” is defined later as follows,

A process is any way or mode in which a given state of a system or of a part of a system changes into another state. If its study is an object of science any process is assumed to be subject to laws which will be stated in terms of determinate interrelations of interdependence between the values of the relevant variables. (Ibid., 138)

This definition indicates that, first, “process” is only a “way or mode” between different “states” of a system, and second, “process” should be subject to laws that are “interrelations” between the variables. Moreover, the terms (“network” and “process”) are linked to the definition of “social system”;

Since a social system is a system of processes of interaction between actors, it is the structure of the relations between the actors as involved in the interactive process which is essentially the structure of the social system. The system is a network of such relationships. (Parsons 1951, 25)

This quotation demonstrates Parsons’ clear understanding of “process” and “network”. First, he used “process” to refer to “interaction between actors,” which constitutes the “system,” and he equates “process” with “structure”. Second, he substituted the term “interactive process” with “relationship” and equated “network” with “structure”.

Parsons was highly critical of Spencer's Theory of Evolution (Parsons 1937, 3). However, he nonetheless resembled Spencer by admitting the frequent and naive use of the words "progress" and "progressive".

A society in which there is a good deal of "disorganization" and "pathology" is almost certainly the necessary price of dynamic openness to *progressive* change (Ibid. 309; italics mine).

In summary, Parsons, one of the modern sociologists who rejected the theory of evolution, frequently utilized both "network" and "process" as key terms in his theories, and those two are closely interlinked. However, they are only subordinate terms supporting the main actors in the theory (e.g. "social action," "social system," and "structure"). "Network" for him refers to the "lower order" relationships within or between a system or subsystems. Similarly, "process" is a kind of route within a state of, or between states of a system.

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### 3. Discussion

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The results of the investigation can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The early classical sociologists (Comte and Spencer) did not use the terms corresponding to "network," perhaps because they were interested in society as a whole. The later classical sociologists, Simmel, Durkheim, Weber, Elias, and Parsons are more or less interested in the idea of "network" in society. This is because the early classical sociologists tended to regard society as an organism destined to progress or to follow the law of evolution. Even among the later classical sociologists, those who were interested in society as a whole (Durkheim and Parsons) did not make much of this concept.
- 2) The early sociologists did not employ the term "process" or used it only for a particular meaning (process of evolution, process of adaptation, etc.). Rather, they wrote more about "progress". However, the later classical sociologists, Simmel, Durkheim, Weber, Elias, and Parsons used the term for various meanings. The term served as a powerful tool to describe certain aspects of society in their historical, comparative and philosophical studies. Most of the later classical sociologists were critical of, and distant from, the notion of "progress" or "evolution". These sociologists paved the way to "process-oriented methodology".
- 3) Among the later classical sociologists, some (e.g. Simmel, Weber and Elias) used "network" and "process" as both interconnected and significant. They regarded a "network" as interlaces among both *human* beings and *ideas* that bring about various "processes" of a society or societies.

The socio-cultural network analysis is supported by this brief study of classical sociologists. Because it can follow the course suggested by (3) as follows;

Every network can be expressed by matrix (M) (Scott 2000; Wasserman and Faust 1994). This matrix can express only relationships at one time (t). It expresses a network as a *structure of state*, as described in Parsons.

$$M = Ms(t)$$

The proposed matrix expresses a usual network theory.

However, it can express relations between elements that bring about change from at one time (t) to another time (t+1). It regards a network as a *structure of process* from t to t+1, i. e.

$$M = Mp(t, t+1)^{15}$$

This can be called a process-oriented matrix, which is different from a state-oriented matrix. This matrix (Mp) works as a function to a state representing vector at one time (V(t)) as follows,

$$V(t+1) = Mp(t, t+1)V(t)$$

It also works as a function to a network of state (Ms) as follows,

$$Ms(t+1) = Mp(t, t+1)Ms(t)$$

This equation expresses the change from one state (V(t) or Ms(t)) to another state (V(t+1) or Ms(t+1)) brought about by a structure of process (Mp(t, t+1)).

Socio-cultural network analysis is originally proposed as a state-oriented matrix (Ms) (cf. Onaka 2007, 2010), which includes both cultural elements and actors as its matrix elements. However, it can be, and it is better to be, assumed to take the form of a process-oriented matrix (Mp), because both cultural elements and social actors change continuously. Only under this assumption, can the socio-cultural network analysis succeed the legacies of the classical sociologists in (3).

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## 4. Conclusion

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This paper indicates that socio-cultural network analysis is a process-oriented methodology. The basis for “process-oriented methodology” was established by the later classical sociologists who were more or less liberated from the notion of progress or evolution. Among them, only Simmel, Weber, and Elias used the term “network” (*Netzwerk, Verflechtung*) to refer to relationships among both human beings and ideas, and in close connection with the term “process,” in their philosophical, historical and comparative studies. Therefore,

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<sup>15</sup> This paper does not describe the nature of this matrix. I note that the matrix is not necessarily linear; further details are beyond the scope of this paper.

“socio-cultural network analysis” is one of successors of this method. It is indisputably natural to regard the network as an example of a process-oriented methodology and as a truly *sociological* network analysis as well.

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